



DIVISION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

"Land, Water, Power and Quality of Life"

P.O. Box 9000

Window Rock, Arizona

86515

Tel (928)871-6592

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 6, 2013

Contact: Geri Hongeva
Media Representative
geri@navajonationparks.org

Animal Lovers Celebrate the 6th Annual Navajo Nation Zoo Fest



Kayla Notah, age 7 from Ft. Defiance and Nicole Pappastamou, age 7 from Sawmill, Az enjoy the company of Eddie the Eagle, Smokey the Bear and Woodsy Owl, May 4, 2013. Navajo Nation Zoo. (Photo by Geri Hongeva)

WINDOW ROCK, AZ. – Navajo Nation Department of Fish & Wildlife celebrated its 6th Annual Navajo Nation Zoo Fest on Saturday, May 4, 2013.

The Navajo Nation Zoo and Botanical Park is the only tribally owned zoo in the country. The zoo is home to over fifty species of southwestern animals, raptors

and reptiles. Nearly all of the animals at this zoo have been orphaned or injured, it is not only a sanctuary to the animals but includes native plants on Navajo country.

The zoo is considered a non-profit organization and operates on limited tribal funds, donations and private sponsors. Currently, the zoo does not have an admission fee. It is a sanctuary for everyone to enjoy.

David Mikesic, the Navajo Nation Zoologist, stated, "We just want people, especially kids, to have fun and take part in all our free activities and entertainment. We want everyone to enjoy the day and take pride in the Navajo Nation Zoo."

Planning and coordination begins six to eight weeks prior to May 4th, it involves over twenty volunteers and additional help from Navajo Fish & Wildlife staff on the day of the event. Volunteers included; National Indian Youth Leadership Project, St. Michaels School, Dine College and Lions Club.

Approximately 4,900 animal lovers joined in the festivities at the Zoo Fest this year. Entertainers included flute player Dan Scaduto, the Amazing Bodinni magician, basketball entertainer Jerrickson Hosteen, bead art by Lisa Richards and a raptor exhibit provided by Hawks Aloft.



A new addition to the zoo, a rustic structure displayed as a Hogan greenhouse captured curious visitors by its appearance. Made out of metal, wood and tamarisk, it provides a cool environment for various plants with a drip irrigation system. The Hogan greenhouse was designed and donated by Will Wilson in September 2012, as part of the Harmony in the Making Project. It is designed to nurture indigenous food plants to maintain growth on Navajo land.

Dine College students in Margaret Mayer's class took a special interest in assembling the Hogan greenhouse and began cultivating Golden Currant, Three Leaf Sumac, Bristlecone Pine, Lodgepole Pine and Buffalo Berry. The greenhouse shelters the plants until they are strong enough to be planted around the Navajo Nation Zoo.

Elizabeth Shonnie, Dine College student, explained, "we are facebook friends of the 'NavajoZoo Arizona' and one day we asked David Mikesic if we could volunteer." The zoo had the Hogan greenhouse but it needed to be assembled. Five students from Dine College met every Tuesday and Thursday to make this possible, stated Shonnie.

Mikesic and his staff are busy bees, all year long. The Zoo Fest has become a popular event, as well as the Zoo Boo festivities in October. The Navajo Nation Zoo seeks creative avenues to continue to nurture the animals and plants at the zoo. Coming soon are four blends of coffee with the Navajo Zoo logo on it. Fifty percent of all net proceeds will go directly to the Navajo Zoo to help this unique sanctuary with operating costs. Mikesic plans to have a press conference to officially unveil the new Navajo Zoo Coffee.

For more information about Navajo Nation Zoo, please visit www.navajozoo.org or call 928-871-6573.

###